

## Catch Me If You Can

"Please don't give up, I'm begging you," he said.

Despite the fact that I looked down at him due to the height difference, that gaze felt greatly reliable, and also scary. There were not many people who can stand on their own, see things with their own eyes, and speak with their own voice. The small man in front of me was capable of all those.

Someone who says, *"It's for my own sake,"* as he acts on my behalf.

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Naturally, after sending off the folks from the Neighborhood Association, I went on my way home with Nishinoya. The sky was mostly indigo blue, without any remnants of the orange setting sun. Walking along the low banks of the riverside, the wind that caressed our sweaty bodies felt a little cold.

"As expected, I got a little rusty."

"Well, taking one or two days off does make you a bit rusty," Nishinoya said.

"My body felt kind of heavy. It felt as though the court and the soles of my feet had become best friends," I joked.

"It did look like they were better friends than my hand and the ball."

"That's awful..."

As I heaved a sigh, feeling the slight pang of heaviness, Nishinoya laughed in amusement.

"From tomorrow onward, let's practice diligently. I want to be able to do follow-ups better. I want to deliver the ball to Asahi-san accurately, to the point where you don't have to worry about me, so that you can forget about me and hit it naturally."

Wondering what kind of face he made while saying that, I glanced at Nishinoya without turning my head. He was facing forward, walking straight ahead. Even though his broad grin was mischievous—ah, those words felt completely sincere. He didn't censor his words, stating them frankly. That was both childish, kind, and, to me, a heavy weight. A comfortable heaviness that I always welcomed in these hands, along with the familiar feel of the ball.

"... I won't forget."

Softly, I tousled his pointy hair. Even with these large hands, with which I powerfully hit the ball, I could gently pat Nishinoya's head. It wasn't a hand without purpose.

"It's okay even if you forget."

Nishinoya's voice trembled slightly. I felt affection rush through me and patted his head once more as I said, "I won't forget."

"It's okay even if you forget, but..."

I asked him what, and then he finally looked up at me. Standing still, he bit his lower lip.

I also stopped and faced him. Even when I was looking down at him, I could not get used to that sensation. It felt like being looked upon from straight ahead.

"I beg you, please don't give up." His eyes, big as cat's, wavered. "Please don't give up... Not a second time, I beg you."

The surroundings were blanketed in darkness, the grass on the river bank rustling with the wind. His big eyes, reflecting the white outdoor lights, made it look as if he was crying. Upset, I unconsciously extended my hand, but then I hesitated.

It was me who was waiting. It was me who let Nishinoya say such a thing. Even though I hurt him with my weakness, with the same hand I used to comfort him—what a joke. *I was too selfish*, I thought.

"...Don't give up on *this*, too!" Nishinoya said, looking slightly upset at me, who looked aimless, and as though floating in mid-air, he seized my hand. At that moment, I took a step forward, closing the distance between us. As I moved closer, I became aware of the small body that did not even reach the height of my chest. A firm body that fit nicely into my arms and chest.

"Please don't forget about me... okay?"

The eyes looking up to me wavered again, but with a different light than earlier. I contemplated on what to do with the hand holding his. Determinedly, I touched his cheek. Nishinoya was not crying, but his cheek had begun to cool. With my hands, as if enclosing it, I brushed his cheek. Looking at how his eyes narrowed with his cheek resting against my hand—like a real cat, which was really cute—I unconsciously loosened my mouth.

"Does it hurt?"

"... I love this hand."

The palm of my hand was rough. The roughness was because of all the spiking. Even otherwise, due to the thick skin, my hand must not have felt nice to touch.

“Can you close your eyes?” he asked.

“Eh?”

Nishinoya smiled naughtily, looked up, and closed his eyes. His lips were apart, just a little. Knowing how I could get cowardly, he sometimes did this kind of thing.

“Eh... here?” I asked.

“Here.”

I hesitated and glanced around at the surroundings and the dark sky before I gently lowered my lips into his thin ones.

“... More?”

“... Idiot.”

After I said such a thing after the kiss, he scoffed and pursed his lips. It was so cute that I thought, *Ah, there was no way I would give this up.*

Once more, uncharacteristically of me, I grazed my lips against his as a surprise before I returned my hold on his hand.

**END**

**Author's notes:**

Thank you for inviting me~!! My first AsaNoya!! They're so cute!!

Haikyuu!! always moves me to tears!!

Advertisement: I am applying for KageHina for the winter Comiket, but I love AsaNoya, too!!

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<http://tirol.sakura.ne.jp/>

Ame no Spica: Spica

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